

No One Like Jesus!

Overview

Today I want to share with you out of the gospel according to Mark. If you want to look up in the scriptures later, you can do so. I'm in Mark chapter 4 and chapter 5. But of course, I'm not going to read all of that to you. I'm just going to begin by reading the first couple of verses in Mark 4. And it says, And he again began to teach by the sea, and a great multitude was gathered to him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea. And the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. Then he taught the many things by parables and spoke to them in his teaching. I would first of all begin to tell you a little story about something I experienced that somehow is a little bit of a reflection in some ways in terms of how people respond to a special speaker in different parts of the world.

It turned out that I was invited to go to Kenya and having arrived, a friend of mine picked me up at the airport. In a few hours, we were out in the distance from the city of Nairobi into some very rugged country. And we came upon a village at the base of Mount Kenya. And there we discovered a pastor there by the name of ... are you ready for this? Simon Ngugi. I just have fun saying his name. Simon Ngugi. Simon was a very good, very energetic Kenyan pastor who had a beautiful grip of the English language as well as the local tribal languages. And Simon was a pastor. And in fact, he had started not less than five churches. And they were all within a reasonable distance of his little farm. By his little farm, he was able to support himself. And he would go by bicycle to each of these little preaching points. Each place had a very simple little structure of a church. And there he would be the pastor. So Simon Ngugi welcomed us along with his family.

And I stayed that night in his little house. Now he had a couple of little structures there were they're made of mud. And the roof is made of a fast grass. The little structure that I was asleep in is actually they're cooking. It's their cooking room, their kitchen. So the first thing they had to do was sweep all the embers, the smoking charcoal embers and move out the hot rocks out of the little kitchen at, you might call it. It wasn't a place to eat. It's a place to do the cooking. And that was my place to sleep for the night. The following day, we went for some distance in a vehicle and arrived at a clearing. And there we were going to set up and I was going to be preaching when the evening time came.

The first people to assemble were the children. They were all excited to see what they called an mzungu. That's the word for English mzungu, a white Englishman. So you always know when they're talking about you because you'll hear the mzungu mzungu or speaking of the white man. So the children are all excited because this white man has come and he's going to share some stories with them.

That was the message. Well, the nice fan out among the nearby villages and got the word out. Mzungu and mzungu. And so the children came first of all, but then the adults also a little slower to catch on. The children would run, the adults would walk. So when we first started the service, speaking, there'd be maybe a

hundred children on the ground before me. But as I continued to speak, and you make sure that your message is quite long because the longer you speak, the larger the crowd and the more people you get to reach.

So as I'm sharing this lengthy message and they don't care how long it is, you're their means of entertainment at this point. And so as the adults are arriving, they move toward the front. They're not interested in sitting in the back. Now there were people who would stop and sit in the back and the crowd got deeper and deeper. The crowd is growing. But more adults would come and they'd want to sit in the front. So they'd come and they'd push their way and they would plunk themselves down so much so that they're actually almost touching my toes. Well then my immediate response is to back up so that I'm not looking straight down on the tops of their foreheads. Well, what I've really done is I've created an option for another front row. And very soon another front row has gathered.

And I move and another front row. And I move and another front row. So to say the least, when you're speaking in places like Kenya, especially out in the village, where they don't have television, they don't have all these kinds of things, when you're a guest, you're quite, you're quite an attraction. And being the attraction and speaking to them can be a very moving situation. We're always moving back because everybody wants to get as close to the Zungu as they possibly can. It's quite exciting to be able to speak to people like that. Here we have Jesus and wherever he went, crowds would gather.

And the statement that you'll read is they never heard anyone explain the word of God. The works, the writings of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, nobody had ever heard anyone speak the word of God quite like this man. The crowds would grow immensely. And there were times when they'd be together with him for two days, three days without food. And we know one of the stories, uh, uh, crescendos with the people being so hungry and the ideas let's send them away, but they're too weak to send away because they're there without food, they're without nourishment. And you know the story, few little fragments of fish and some bread. Jesus multiplied it and he literally fed thousands, five thousands in fact. So it's not hard to visualize this picture right here that as Jesus is speaking, the crowd is growing.

A great multitude is gathered, but he's teaching them by the seaside. So my picture in my head is that as he's speaking at the seaside and the crowd is coming closer and closer, he's backing up and unlike the Kenyans, maybe the people would come and sit in the front row. And so Jesus is back up on another front row and all of a sudden he's standing in the water. So somebody hastily is thinking and they bring their fishing boat over and said, use my boat. So Jesus gets in the boat and they shove it out a little bit from the water. I'd like to bring to your attention, by the way, that at the end of the day after Jesus has spoken, it says when the evening came, he said to the disciples, let's cross over to the other side of this lake. And it says, and when they left the multitude, they took him in the boat and other little boats were also with him. Ah, as Jesus at the end of the day has been speaking from in a boat where he could be out and the people aren't so quite so pressing, what happens obviously is that people start running along the shore and getting other fishing boats.

And now they're coming and they're rowing because now the front row is going to be in boats. So there's all these little boats crowding around him now, jostling for position to get closer because this man, this Jesus has such an astounding reputation of healing the sick and doing marvelous things. Everybody wanted to be close to him. So much though that at the end of the day, when the little boat that he's in strikes out to cross over, other little boats were still apparently with him. So intriguing. The question has got to be begged. What was so incredible about the entirely different situation for me? I go to Kenya, I'm an Mzungu. So I'm sort of like an anomaly. Like I'm different. I'm unique. I'm dressed differently. I speak another language and it's obvious I'm fully clothed. I'm quite rich. These people want to get close to anything that even smacks of success. But here we have Jesus with his own people.

So it's not like he's from another planet or another continent. Jesus is from among them. But the stories about him, of course, have caused the multitudes to grow and grow. Everybody is pursuing him. Everybody wants to hear him speak of divine truth because what he said really riveted in their minds. So in my own thoughts about what this would look like, I'm thinking about what would keep the people with Jesus for as much as two days. Like they'd fall asleep in the evening, just scattered all over the place on the ground, I suppose. Maybe a few would go to a friend nearby and maybe bunk in with them for the evening. But the majority of them just had to sleep on the ground in the morning. Jesus is confronted already, instant crowd. They're still there from the night before.

What was so magnetizing? And I suggest this. There's nobody like Jesus. Nobody could tell a story like Jesus. Think about it. I could try and tell you what it's like to be in a den of lions. I've never been in a den of lions. I have been surrounded by lions. My life was hanging by a thread. And that's another story to tell on another occasion. Sit close to this channel and you'll find me talking about where I was threatened by five lions. But I've never been in a cave or in a cage or in an enclosure with a bunch of hungry lions. But Daniel was. And who better to tell the story about what it's like to be in a cave with a den of lions?

I suggest to you that as Jesus was telling the story about this man being tossed in with the lions, the story would be so riveting because he'd been an eyewitness. When he tells you the story about lions, you could smell their breath. The hair in the back of your neck would stand up. When he would talk about the lions coming close and then their mouths were shut, they could not touch him. What an incredible story. But wait, what about telling the story about crossing the Red Sea?

We could all try and tell such a story, but who could give it such a graphic? Who could ever tell it in such a way like you felt like you were there? Jesus. Jesus could tell it to you in such a tremendous fashion. Not only from the view of the people that were following Moses, but he could tell you what was going on in the mind of Moses and the challenge that Moses was facing.

He could have you sitting at the edge of your pew if you were on such a structure, sitting at the edge with excitement as he talks about the soldiers of Egypt descending upon them. Their lives are hanging by a thread and suddenly there's gale force winds and the water stands up and the people cross over on dry ground. I'm excited to tell you about it right now, but I never saw it. Think about Jesus telling that story. Think about Jesus telling the story about the night of the Passover when a little fellow's heart might have been broken.

When his daddy goes out, according to the law of God, as they were instructed through the mouth of Moses, every family is to kill a lamb tonight, collect its blood and paint the doorposts of your house. And the little fellow follows his daddy out to the flock. The daddy has a very sharp knife. The little boy's heart sinks within him as he sees daddy take a hold of his favorite lamb, slit his throat and collect the blood. The horror that might have been on that little fellow's heart as he watched his daddy do something so strange painting the front of the house with blood up one side of the door across the little and down the other side. What a weird thing was going on, but this was the protective plan. This was going to be the redeeming factor for all of the Jews. And the people were familiar with this story because every year they would celebrate the Passover. Every family would reunite and they would eat the Passover lamb. They would do everything according to how it was done back at the Exodus time, but nobody could explain it quite like Jesus, how one lamb was slain for a family and that family was protected by the blood of that lamb.

I tell you, nobody could tell these stories like Jesus. Nobody could tell you about the Father like Jesus could. I suggest to you that to listen to Jesus talk about the Father, you suddenly felt like you knew the Father. You see the Jewish people knew an awesome God from the Old Testament. The God whose voice scared the living daylights out of them and it's recorded back in the book. It's recorded for us that the people came to Moses and said, please tell God don't talk to us anymore. His voice frightens us. God was a strict God. And if you stepped out of line, like people died because they were unfruitful in their life.

They were, they died because of disobedience. They died because of sin. Thousands of people were dying. God is a strict God. Be holy for I am holy and the failure to live up to His holiness. So you see, they only knew God as a fearsome God. Unless they were somebody like David who spent time with the Lord who spent time in prayer, he would start strumming his guitar and singing about the goodness of God. But David was an uncommon fellow indeed. But now as Jesus comes and he talks about the Father, his Father felt like you knew the Father. And Jesus said, you want to talk to the Father? Here to do so. He's your. . . My Father, who's in heaven. You fell in love with. . . talked about him. Hell? You don't believe in hell? Wait a minute, friend.

If Jesus were to come to you right now and start talking to you about hell, you'd be scared to death because nobody but no one can talk to you about the fiery indignation of a holy God. Be holy for I'm holy. They're cast into the lake of fire where there's torment for eternity. Nobody could make it as real as Jesus. But think about this with me. Remember when Jesus met the woman at the well and he talks to her about her relationships and even describes her life to a tee about her failed marriages. So much so that she ran into the village and spoke to so many of her friends and said, come and see the man. Come and see the man. He told me everything there is to know about my life. This man's a mind reader. He saw inside my soul.

What does this tell us about Jesus? Jesus meets a man by the name of Nathaniel early in the gospels and the moment he meets him he says, now here is a man in whom there is no guile. How did Jesus know that this is a man that did not carry guile in his soul? Because Jesus knew people the moment he saw them. He knew them.

He knew their hearts. He knew. There would be Pharisees that would be listening to him speak and they would mutter among themselves in tones that no one else would hear. But Jesus knew what they were saying and he would answer questions. He would rebut their comments and their thoughts. Jesus would look at a crowd and he knew who were believing and he knew who were doubters. He knew, I suggest to you, that as Jesus is talking to the crowd at the same time he's continuously communicating with his father. He said, I don't say anything. I don't do anything without confiding in my father. So while Jesus is telling stories to this crowd and keeping them absolutely riveted with glorious stories and divine truth at the same time he's experiencing communication with the father.

Two things he's doing at the same time. But wait, while Jesus is talking to this crowd in such mysterious and glorious ways, the devil's right behind whispering in his ear. You've got their attention now, but you know their mind. You know their sin has already condemned them, Jesus. Look at them, pathetic souls. They haven't got a chance. Their mind. Their mind. Jesus was fighting the fiery darts of the accusing devil as he's communicating with the father and as he's holding his audience spellbound. But I think there's more. I think there's more. As Jesus is speaking to this crowd, there's a little fellow sitting up on a little knoll gas grass just over here. And that little fellow is hearing Jesus talk about the wonderful father and just that word father suddenly clicks something in that little fellow's mind because you see that little guy is fatherless.

His daddy died not very long ago. There would be children in that crowd that could not relate to the word father because their father had deserted their mother or their father had died of a mysterious illness. And so here's a little guy that Jesus is reaching out and telling us about the wonders of this glorious father, but a little fellow is sitting up on this knoll grass and he's fighting tears because he misses his daddy so much.

I tell you well Jesus is communicating with the father and fighting the criminal thoughts of the devil. And while he's holding that audience absolutely spellbound, his heart is reaching out to that little boy because he knows the torment in that little fellow's heart. I honestly believe it was all Jesus could do to keep on doing what he was doing and ministering to these adults when there's a little fellow over here with a broken heart. But wait there's a little lady sitting over here she hasn't eaten in five days. She's absolutely poverty stricken. Her husband is gone for whatever reason. There's no breadwinner for her house and she's got hungry children at home. She's hungry and Jesus knows the torment of that woman's heart. Can you imagine all these things that are all happening simultaneously? Think about this as I'm speaking to you in the comforts of wherever you are in your home or on your little cell phone.

As I'm speaking to you Jesus knows exactly what's going on in your heart and he knows your response to this story I'm telling you right now. But at the same time he knows everybody in your city knows everybody in your country. He knows all souls well. So in going over the picture again Jesus while he's keeping thousands of people totally enraptured with everything that he's saying at the very same time the enemy is fighting him whispering in his ear and accusing and saying they're not yours they'll never be yours. Heal them but they're still going to be in hell with me. But at the same time he's conversing with the father because he does nothing on his own. But at the same time he can hear the cries of people all through that audience. He knows what's going on. He knows and he hears voices but there's still one more thing going on as he continuously seems to be distracted by something just over there. And the audience is enthralled. What does he see? What does he hear? They hear nothing. They see nothing. All at the same time with all of this going on he's communicating with the father and as he's doing so he's speaking to them about the father.

They're hearing things about the father they've never heard before. Never ever ever. The end of the day comes and it's so interesting that it says that there were all these little boats around the boat that he was in and it says that when the boat started to depart all the other little boats tried to follow him. So intriguing. I'm so intrigued by this whole story. But the boat proceeds and Jesus is worn out and he falls asleep in the boat and you know how that story goes. Hell, slumbering in the boat, wind's drum comes up. He sleeps through the whole thing. The disciples become terrified. They are sure they're gonna get swamped. Now I've only been on the Sea of Galilee once in a boat and it was a very calm day.

But I've read instances where it can get extremely violent. It's just the way the wind patterns can go. A boat could get swamped in a moment. And so they woke the master up and said, don't you care about us. We're gonna all drown. Jesus causes the storm to cease. And then they're doubly terrified. Even the winds obey him. It seems to me that they must have all gone to sleep in the boat at that point because they didn't arrive on the other side. It seems until dawn because we read at the beginning of the very next chapter, they came over to the other side of the sea into the country of the Gatorines. And when he came out of the ship immediately, there met him, a man of the tombs, a man of the graves, a man who chose to live among the dead, so demented and so deranged and so troubled, he was more comfortable with the dead than he was with the living.

It says, he dwelt among the tombs. How could he do such a thing? We picture a grave site in our country as stones placed nicely around a park-like setting. But over there, they would dig caves. They would find an empty space in the ground or with Chezzell and Hammer. They'd create caves and there they would bury their dead underground. And so this man would be crawling into those creases where bodies had been left to decay. He was comfortable there. No one could bind him. No one could control him. And it says that not even with chains because he had often been bound with fetters and with chains, but he broke them all. He had such dynamic strength and power. Spiritual enemy gives physical strength. I won't go into the details.

I've seen such things. He broke the chains and it says no one could tame him. I could imagine the women of the town and of the area saying to the town fathers, you've got to do something. It says the day and night, he was running in the mountains in the tombs. He was screaming. I can see him descending from that area and running into the town and scaring the lives-and-day lights out of the children because he'd be running naked among them, screaming, hollering, totally deranged, cutting himself with stones, weeping and bleeding. But when Jesus arrived, this man, it says, when he saw Jesus from afar off, he ran and he worshiped him. That doesn't really compute, does it? A man totally deranged by demons and here the Scripture says in verse 6, worshiped him. Don't get carried away with that worship. I perceive that he assumed a worshiping position, dropping on his knees, perhaps reaching out with his hands. So he appeared maybe to those onlookers that he was worshiping, but the devil is in no mood to worship Jesus. He cries with a loud voice and he says, what do I have to do with you? Son of the Most High God. Does the demon recognize who he is? He does. He calls him the Most High God. I plead with you, don't torment me.

The devil's afraid of Jesus. Jesus said, come out of the man, you unclean spirit. And he asked the unclean spirit, what is your name? The reply came, Legion, for we are many. And he beseeched him much that he would not send them out of the country. The demons were pleading, don't send me away. Why? Because you see, these evil spirits were very content. It was like Sodom and Gomorrah. Don't send us to a righteous town. Don't send us to a place where people are seeking God. Leave us here in this filthy pit where sodomy is the way of the people. And so don't send us away. Nearby, there was a herd of pigs. And I think you know the story. Jesus sent the demons into the pigs. But the point I want you to understand is this, that while he was on the other side, speaking to a huge crowd of people, mesmerizing their spiritual appetite, calling upon them to recognize the love of the Father, the endurance of eternity, the glorious majesty of the redemptive plan, teaching them about the love of the Father. And at the same time, fighting the devil, at the same time communicating with the Father.

And at the same time, hearing many, many voices of people within their hearts crying out because they were so troubled in their spirits and in their hearts. But Jesus still heard one more voice. I find that's incredible. This man on the other side of the lake was getting Jesus' attention. And that's why he kept on being distracted. Because with all of this racket and all of this activity, Jesus still heard one more voice, one more voice. And at the end of the day, Jesus points to the other side and says to the disciples, I have to go there. Jesus, by the way, the people wanted him to stay. It's not recorded. But that was always, that was always the way it was. Don't leave now. Teach us some more. Tell us some more stories. They wanted him more.

But Jesus went to where he was needed. He went to the man who was totally lost. And so that brings me to this point. Do we ever wonder with all of the people in the world who are praying right now, does he hear my voice? Does he pay attention to me? And the answer is, of course he does. Of course he does. He hears the faintest cry. He hears the silent voices within our souls. Because you see, there's nobody like Jesus.

Nobody cares like he does. And if there's a cry going on in your heart, or if there's even outward cries that come from your, your innermost being, Jesus is attentive to every cry, to every prayer. There's nobody like our Jesus. There's nobody like our Jesus. And though millions have come.

There's still room for one. And remember this, in Kenya, I always stepped back and allowed for a new front row. There was always room for one more. Jesus backed up and backed up until he's standing in the water. He said, come unto me, all who are weary and tired and worn out, and I will give you rest. That rest is available to you.

Jesus loves you more than you could ever, ever imagine. God bless you. Pass on this story to somebody, why don't you? Tell them how to get to this story. Somebody needs to hear it today, a friend of yours.

Pass it on.

Let's get others listening.

And let's get others receiving and

enjoying the goodness of God.

Amen.